1: Tew E-4 (no date) 1950 FT7 Yao FT7

Yao make square houses.[1] Panelled doors and glass windows, deck-chairs and palm furniture are becoming more and more popular. The men wear long Moslem robes and the women are clothed in cotton. In the rural areas there are usually a few craftsmen who still ply their trades as carpenters and blacksmiths, though the latter no longer smelt, but use scrap-iron.

Labour Migration

Statistics are not available for the Yao of Portuguese East Africa or Tanganyika Territory. Yao constitute 34 per cent. of the total population of South Nyasa district, 15 per cent. of upper Shire, 11 per cent. of Blantyre and Zomba.[2] The proportion of labour migrants in these districts was in 1937 as follows:[3]

District	*Adult males fit to work*	*Percentage of emigrants*	*Number producing economic crops*	*Number of subsistence producers*	*Emigrants not heard of since 1930*
South Nyasa .	24,230	27·1	2,912 (12%)	12,025 (49%)	873
Upper Shire .	24,673	15·9	2,555 (10%)	16,629 (67%)	233
Blantyre . .	25,330	15·6	3,788 (15%)	10,165 (40%)	986
Zomba . .	26,679	12·4	7,720 (29%)	9,040 (33%)	553

South Nyasa district, which is unfertile waterless bush with a long history of famine and food shortage, has the highest proportion of labour migrants. Upper Shire, though not fertile, is more prosperous, benefiting from the tobacco- and cotton-growing industries, and from the dried-fish trade.[4]

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION AND POLITICAL STRUCTURE[5]

Kinship and Local Grouping

Among the Yao succession is matrilineal and marriage mainly matrilocal. According to some informants succession formerly passed down the line of brothers, as with the Bemba, but it now passes direct to the eldest sister's eldest son, or to descendants of other sisters in order of seniority.[6] Chiefly succession follows the same rule, but the most senior may be set aside for a more suitable candidate.[7]

Clan names, *lukoryo*, are inherited matrilineally, and formerly designated exogamous units,[8] but the marriage prohibition has now ceased to operate. Holders of the same clan name are unable to trace descent from a common ancestress, and for commoners clan names seem to have quite lost their significance; they are, however, carefully remembered in the chiefly lines and in other lines of hereditary rank, such as village headmen.

Within the general kinship grouping of the clan, a smaller group is recognized,

[1] Werner, 1906, p. 144; Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, pp. 20–2, describes a round hut.

[2] 1931 Census information is taken because the district boundaries were changed between 1931 and 1945, so that the information in the 1945 Census would not be susceptible of comparison with that given in the 1937 Survey of Male Adult Population in the *Bell Report*, Appendix A.

[3] *Bell Report*, 1938, Appendix A. [4] Smith, 1937.

[5] Information, unless otherwise stated, is from Mitchell, and relates to south Nyasaland Yao.

[6] Johnston, 1897, p. 471; Meredith Sanderson, 1920, p. 370. *Cf.* Macdonald, 1882, vol. i, p. 187, who says that brothers inherit before sister's son.

[7] Ibid., p. 189. [8] Stannus, 4, 1922, p. 236.

2: Mitchell E-5 (1946-1949) 1956 FT7 Yao FT7

133 swiftly throughout the year. In the plains many small rivers
312 flow quite strongly during the rainy season but dry up shortly afterwards and by July or August the water shortage becomes acute for many villages. In the rainy season plenty of shallow pools supply the wants of the people; as these dry up the women must go farther and farther afield to find water. To the east of the watershed of the plain the distance they may have to go is still within the bounds of possibility, but on the valley lip this is no longer so,[1] and large areas of the escarpment, especially to the south towards the Shire Highlands, are unpopulated. The Administration has been sinking wells in an attempt to increase the amount of land available for human habitation. It reports that soon after wells had been sunk villages moved there and started gardens:[2] this indicates the pressure of the population on
134 the land. Within the area where most of my study was made, i.e. from the northern fringe of the Shire Highlands, agriculturalists describe the soil as 'variable'. The Agricultural Officer at Zomba, writing of this area, said:

> In the valley of the Shire the soils may be described as rich sandy alluvium. Around the hills the soil is chiefly red with a high percentage of clay and a small percentage of sand. Much of the soil in the ridge of highland stretching from the Chikala hills in the south to the hills near Mount Mangoche in the north is sandy and poor, with pockets of good rich soil here and there. The soil improves as the land slopes down each side of the ridge to the west to the Shire Valley, and to the east to the shores of Lake Shirwa and Lake Chiuta.[3]

Climate

132 The climate is the tropical monsoon type. The average annual rainfall over the years 1944–6 at the three stations, Jalasi, Nyambi and Mlomba, i.e. placed at even intervals throughout the area of study, was 41·89 inches.[4] The rainfall is slightly heavier in the higher areas. This rain falls almost entirely during the

[1] The relation of water supply to population distribution in Nyasaland is discussed by Dixey, F., 'The Distribution of the Population of Nyasaland', *Geographical Review*, xviii (April 1928), 274 ff.

[2] *Nyasaland Protectorate Report on Native Affairs* (Zomba, 1931), 47.

[3] *Report of the Agricultural Officer, Zomba, to the Director of Agriculture* (1944), (unpublished).

[4] I am indebted to the Agricultural Officer, Fort Johnston, for this information.